

## Chapter IV

### SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

62. The general debate, which took place in the course of 14 plenary meetings from 16 to 24 July 1985, covered the range of topics to be considered by the Conference, including not only item 7 but also item 8 of the agenda, which was more specifically the concern of the Main Committees. All speakers expressed appreciation of the efforts made by the host State and by the secretariat in preparing for the Conference.

63. The representatives of States and the observers who addressed the Conference, as well as the representatives of specialized agencies and United Nations bodies, programmes and offices who made statements, commented on the various issues to be dealt with by the Conference. Some intergovernmental organizations also made statements in the plenary. Statements were made on behalf of a number of non-governmental organizations.

64. Opening the general debate at the third plenary meeting on 16 July 1985, Mrs. L. Shahani, Secretary-General of the Conference, stated that the United Nations Decade for Women had brought additional benefits and rights to women, but the possibilities to realize these benefits and rights under favourable conditions had significantly decreased in consequence of the recent difficult economic situation. At the same time it was becoming increasingly clear that political and economic problems could not be solved without the full participation of women in shaping the future of society and contributing to international peace and security. The values, aspirations and ideals of women could reorient a troubled and violent world. Women represented the new hope as the world prepared for the coming century.

65. She said that the value of the Decade as a symbol and mechanism ought not to be underestimated, for it had moved Governments and non-governmental organizations all over the world to take action benefiting women. Although in many instances performance had fallen short of promise, the important point was that an irreversible process, far-reaching in its implications, had been set in motion by the Decade.

66. During the Decade significant lessons had been learnt about the actual status and role of women in their societies. There was also a better understanding of the processes which gave rise to problems and conflicts common to women in different cultures. There was greater awareness of the ways in which global economic and political issues directly affected the lives of women. The organized women's movement initiated in the nineteenth century had become a global force. The mechanism of the Decade had caused the invisible majority of humankind - the women - to become more visible on the global scene.

67. Noting the substantial progress made towards legal equality and the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by over 70 States, she drew attention to the fact that actual changes had not kept pace with legislative provisions. Since there was no guarantee that economic growth would automatically enhance the dignity of women, she stressed the need to re-examine the meaning of "integration of women in development" to ensure that development would not perpetuate the position of women as a disadvantaged group or increase their "double burden" without adequate remuneration. With regard

to peace, the Decade had succeeded in creating public awareness of the need for women to take an active role in promoting peace and disarmament, particularly through participation in peace movements. It seemed necessary at the end of the Decade to expand and deepen public understanding in order that peace would also be understood as the absence of conditions that produce violence at the family, local, national and international levels.

68. She reviewed the progress made with respect to sub-themes of the Decade, employment, education and health. She drew attention to new and continuing challenges in each of these areas.

69. She referred to the obstacles encountered during the Decade which hampered the advancement of women. At the international level, she identified these obstacles as including threats to global peace and security, the escalation of the arms race, foreign aggression and domination, racial discrimination, and exploitative economic relations among nations. At the national level, the obstacles were attitudes which perceived women as inferior to men, and the insufficient understanding and recognition of maternity as a distinct and essential social function which could only be performed by women and therefore deserved full recognition and required specific support.

70. Turning next to Forward-looking Strategies, she said that the close interrelationship of the three goals of the Decade, equality, development and peace, was more evident in 1985 than it had been in 1975 or 1980. It was one of the main messages of the Decade that women's participation in, and their contribution to, society must be envisaged as a composite and integral whole. Although the Forward-looking Strategies dealt with new areas, it also addressed itself to issues similar to those treated in the Plan of Action of Mexico City, 1975, and the Programme of Action adopted in Copenhagen in 1980, showing that the surface had only been scratched and much remained to be done.

71. She said that the impoverishment of women was on the increase, a phenomenon known as the feminization of poverty. A new approach to development was materializing that sought to reformulate and broaden the goals of development in terms of equity, redistributive justice, human dignity and national sovereignty. However, it required that women themselves define their own needs, values, strategies and goals and meant the exercise by women of power within and outside the home. The road from the feminization of poverty to the exercise of power by women was a long and painful one, but the march of women, globally and hand-in-hand, had already begun.

72. In concluding, she said that the Conference represented hope and challenge for women the world over, but this hope ought to be justified through a manifestation of the political will of Governments to provide the required policies, resources and programmes that would benefit women, particularly at the grass-roots level.

73. The representatives of practically all States participating in the Conference spoke in the general debate considered that the Conference was a welcome opportunity for casting a critical look at what had been achieved since 1975 to enhance the status of women and for looking forward to the period up to the year 2000 in which, they hoped, the many still unfulfilled aspirations of women could be realized. In that sense, they said, the Conference should be regarded not merely as the end of an epoch but also as heralding a better future for women.

74. Many delegations expressed the view that the holding of the Conference in 1985 was significant, for not only did it mark the close of the United Nations Decade for Women, but it was also the fortieth anniversary year of the establishment of the United Nations. Some recalled the victory over fascism in the Second World War that had prompted the founders of the Organization to set up a framework within which States could work together in order to achieve the purposes and give effect to the principles of the Charter, and emphasized the contribution of women to the victory. They considered that those purposes and principles, spelt out in broad terms in the Charter, were still valid and that the objectives of the Decade coincided with them.

75. Delegations expressed satisfaction with the fact that the Conference was being held in the continent of Africa, in Nairobi, and many paid a tribute to those women of Africa who, along with their peoples, had won national liberation and those still struggling for liberation and were now contributing appreciably to the quest for their countries' independent development.

76. Some representatives stated that 1985 was also the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which had played an important role in improving the situation of women.

77. Many representatives recognized the catalytic role of the initiatives taken by the United Nations, through its proclamation of the International Women's Year and subsequently the United Nations Decade for Women, in raising the level of consciousness of the world community concerning the inequalities existing between men and women, and the need for women's full participation and integration within all sectors of national life in order to accelerate development.

78. It was widely recognized and reaffirmed that the Declaration and the World Plan of Action adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year, held at Mexico City in 1975, and the Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, held at Copenhagen in 1980, together provided a broad policy and planning framework, as well as specific guidelines and priorities, for action to be taken at the national, regional and international levels. Many representatives cited major achievements during the Decade at those levels. A number of them expressed the opinion that, together with the decisions of the Conference, the historic Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the United Nations Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation, should form the basis for activities furthering the advancement of women in decades to come, in particular for achieving equality for women and respect for their rights.

79. Several representatives were of the view that other international instruments and strategies should be taken into account in the formulation of Forward-looking Strategies, including the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. They also referred to the declarations of the Sixth and the Seventh Conferences of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries.

Review and appraisal of progress achieved and obstacles encountered during the Decade

80. All delegations stated that the major task of the Conference was to review the activities of the past 10 years in implementing the World Plan of Action and the Programme for the Second Half of the Decade at the national, regional and international levels. In reviewing the achievements of the Decade in advancing the status of women, most representatives acknowledged significant progress towards the attainment of the objectives of the Decade. Many representatives stressed the important role played by women in defence of peace, in national liberation struggles, in national construction, defence and production, as well as in the cultural and social fields.

81. Many representatives recognized that a 10-year period was a short span of time in history and that it would hardly have been possible in that time to effect the profound transformation required to achieve all the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, despite notable progress made in many areas. Because of this limited time, and owing to continued and accentuated economic and political difficulties, particularly during the second half of the Decade, the potential of women was in many respects still under-utilized. They considered that the human resource represented by the female majority of the population should be mobilized and enlisted more widely in the cause of the advancement not only of women but also of their countries' national economic and social situation. There were no grounds for complacency, they said, for at a time when whole regions of Africa were suffering the ravages of drought and famine and when many countries were beset by economic recession, it was a grievous waste of resources to ignore the potential contribution women could make to a betterment of national life.

82. Many delegations stressed that the three themes of the Decade and of the Conference were closely interrelated. There could not be real and sustained economic and social development, they said, except in an environment of peace, nor could the equality of the sexes become a reality in the absence of such development. They expressed the hope that the Conference's recommendations would be such as to encourage Governments to strengthen their resolve to work for a better future for women, who were the principal concern of the Conference, and indeed for all humanity. They appreciated that opinions might differ as to the policies most likely to lead to the fulfilment of the hopes voiced by women and men everywhere for a secure existence under conditions of justice and equality. But they also felt that in the course of the Decade Governments and people had gained a greater awareness of the situations that needed correcting and that, partly as a result of the activities deployed under the auspices of the United Nations and its associated agencies and subsidiary bodies, attitudes had changed, traditional views being gradually superseded by progressive ones with respect to the status of women. They considered that a spirit of co-operation among the participants in the Conference should make it possible to work out recommendations that might serve as guidelines for future action at the national, regional and international level for achieving, by the year 2000, the objectives desired by the Conference.

83. Many countries pointed out that the progress towards the advancement of women during the Decade had been variable; different countries had achieved progress in different respects, depending upon the conditions and needs of society. For instance, representatives of countries with centrally planned economies reported that these countries had achieved full legal and de facto equality of women and intensified their efforts to enhance the participation of women in policy and decision-making bodies at all levels of society and in all fields of science and

technology. The representatives of countries with developed market economies reported that in these countries equality of the sexes had been substantially achieved in legislation, and in employment, education and health, and stressed intensified efforts for the participation of women in society in accordance with women's own needs, priorities and aspirations. Representatives of developing countries, on the other hand, noting some progress especially in legislation, literacy, education and employment, reported the growing importance of the role played by self-reliant, grass-roots organizations of women. They also reported efforts for more effective integration of women in agricultural, industrial and services programmes and projects.

84. Many representatives noted that during the Decade increasing numbers of women had assumed the role of sole or principal breadwinners and that a visible growth in the number of female-headed households had occurred. Many developing countries noted, however, the difficulties confronted by these women in gaining access to resources and infrastructure, such as housing. The representatives of countries with centrally planned economies mentioned significant progress in their countries towards enabling women to combine effectively their roles as mothers with their roles as producers and wage-earners. Representatives of countries with developed market economies also reported important progress in their countries as regards the social services that enabled women to carry on a gainful occupation and at the same time to fulfil their family responsibilities; in addition, they reported a growing trend towards the sharing of child care responsibilities between women and men.

85. It was noted that, whereas most significant progress had been made towards the legal equality of the sexes, the fact that such equality was not attained in reality in all fields meant variable and, in some countries, disappointing levels of integration of women in different sectors and areas of social, economic and political development, and in the peace process. Because women's access to productive resources, to health, education and employment was not fully achieved, and because women's integration in non-traditional sectors and areas had been a relatively slow and recent process, much remained to be done beyond the Decade. This state of affairs necessitated particular attention to appropriate strategies and mechanisms that would redress the situation.

86. Some representatives particularly mentioned their countries' support for the United Nations system during the Decade (e.g., Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Labour Organisation). Many representatives, mentioning their appreciation to the secretariat for the Conference, the Branch for the Advancement of Women of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, called for the further strengthening of the Branch as a focal point within the United Nations. Some representatives drew attention to a cross-organizational review of the activities of the United Nations system for the advancement of women by the Economic and Social Council, and indicated that Member States were eager that the United Nations system should achieve effective results. Other representatives stated that adequate machinery must be devised to ensure that the United Nations system continues and strengthens its involvement with women's issues after the end of the Decade. Yet other representatives emphasized the need to make maximum and effective use of existing facilities within the United Nations system.

87. A large number of representatives stated that their countries had established or strengthened the governmental machinery for promoting the advancement of women. These institutions were reported to range from full-fledged ministries, to

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departments, commissions, committees and bureaux. Measures were also being taken to strengthen those which had been established before the Decade and additional efforts were reported to introduce institutional measures that would facilitate the integration of women in all mainstream sectoral activities.

88. Since the situation of women was considered to be much alike within particular regions many delegates praised the numerous regional activities undertaken for promoting the advancement of the status of women. These included the women's programmes of the regional commissions of the United Nations, and the other activities carried out at the regional level by such organizations as the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the Nordic countries, the Group of Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries, and the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States. In this connection, many countries reported that conferences, regional and international meetings and collaborative research had been organized in preparation for the Conference.

89. The great majority of representatives referred to obstacles to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women encountered at the international, regional and national levels.

90. It was widely recognized that international obstacles included: world political tension and instability, the arms race especially in its nuclear aspects and the danger of its expansion to outer space, and military interventions and conflicts and emergency situations, suppression of national liberation movements, the global economic recession, an unjust and unbalanced international economic order, growing external debts and shrinking international trade, all of which had hampered the advancement of women during the Decade. Several representatives particularly cited global obstacles caused by imperialist aggression and intervention, colonialism and neo-colonialism, the denial of the right to self-determination of peoples, racism and fascism, foreign and illegal occupation. Some representatives related obstacles encountered during the Decade to the non-observance of human and humanitarian rights stressing that armed conflicts could hardly be expected to be resolved peacefully when at the same time there did not exist a sufficient will to grant to the most helpless victims of those conflicts - that is, women and children - the basic protection to which they were entitled according to humanitarian international law and as refugees.

#### Equality

Most countries cited extensive legislative progress made within the Decade. In a majority of countries, the required legal framework for ensuring the equality of women and men was reported to be in place, and relatively few countries mentioned the need for enacting or amending broad equality legislation. Constitutional changes had been made, where necessary, to guarantee women full civil and political rights. In addition, laws had been enacted in a range of countries concerning such areas as labour relations, in particular equal employment practices, equal pay, social security and protection of women, parental leave, part-time work, day care centres for the children of working parents, prepared or self-prepared reasonably priced meals and flexible hours of work for women with a view to facilitating the combination of paid work and family responsibilities. However, these legislative provisions had not always been fully implemented.

In many countries equality of the sexes was reported to be not only a de jure achievement, but a fact in most spheres of life, including political life, policy

and decision-making, science and technology, employment, education and health. Many countries reported the substantial progress attained during the Decade but noted the need for further progress towards the realization of such equality in such areas as political participation and integration of women in non-traditional sectors and activities. Many developing countries, on the other hand, reported that de facto equality was lagging behind the legislative progress of the Decade, particularly with respect to women's access to resources. They suggested that basic structural changes of society would be required in order to attain de facto equality. Traditional attitudes and gender-stereotyped images, remaining sociological, cultural and economic barriers, as well as economic inequalities between nations, and excessive expenditures on armaments were mentioned as major causes of the perpetuation of a system of inequalities based on gender.

93. Obstacles to the advancement of women at the national level were identified by many representatives, who mentioned as examples the persistence of traditional attitudes of male superiority based on deep-seated socio-cultural norms and the sexual stereotyping still prevalent in many societies.

94. Several delegations reported on measures taken in their countries to ensure that married women enjoyed equality of rights with their husbands in the management of the family's financial affairs. They explained that, whereas in the past a married woman in those countries had had to obtain her husband's consent or concurrence for the purpose of engaging in business, obtaining credit and concluding certain contracts, she would henceforth possess full autonomous contractual capacity on a par with her husband.

95. The representatives of several Moslem countries stated that it was regrettable that the teachings of Islam concerning the rights and status of the woman in the family and in society were widely misunderstood. They emphasized that the fundamental law and scripture of Islam had proclaimed the equality of men and women with regard to rights and duties many centuries before equal rights legislation had been enacted in other regions. They pointed out that in their countries more and more women were entering professions and skilled occupations and many had attained high elective and appointive office both at the national and at the local level.

96. Among the many positive achievements of the Decade, the adoption by the General Assembly of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was mentioned. At the opening of the Conference, the Convention had been ratified or acceded to by 76 States. Several other countries reported their intention to sign and ratify the Convention within a short time. Many speakers urged that countries which had not already done so should ratify or accede to the Convention soon. Some representatives noted the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and expressed satisfaction with the fact that the Committee had approved the national reports of their countries.

97. Many countries referred to the valuable contribution of non-governmental organizations in promoting the advancement of women, stressing the contributions of women's organizations in community activities such as maternal and child care, vocational training for the disabled and the provision of social services for the aged. Many also emphasized the need for strengthened co-operation of governmental and non-governmental organizations to help integrate women in all sectors of society. Some speakers mentioned that, with national machinery in place at the end of the Decade in a majority of countries, such co-operation would be more effective.

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98. Many representatives reported on the greater political participation of women at local and national levels as well as in decision and policy-making levels in the legislative process and other sectoral activities. In some countries women were reported to have attained substantial political participation, accounting for almost one third of the members of the legislature. In other countries, such participation was reported to be increasing but still low. The removal of restrictions on the entry of women into high-level services of national administrations was also reported.

#### Development

99. Many delegations considered that one of the main achievements of the Decade was the recognition of the essential role of women in development. They emphasized the importance their Governments attached to the integration of women in all development sectors and activities, both as beneficiaries and contributors and in accordance with women's needs and aspirations. They noted the significant progress made in the recognition both of women's actual contribution to development and of their potential for contributing to the realization of national development goals and objectives. With legislation and national machinery in place, these Governments intended to strengthen efforts to integrate women in national policies, plans, programmes and projects.

100. Several representatives stated that women's problems could be solved only on the basis of overall socio-economic development of the country concerned. Programmes of women's development should be an integral part of development plans. Some representatives stated also that de facto equality and development of women should be based on steady growth of productive forces, the absence of unemployment, free education, vocational training at all levels, and free health care and social security.

101. Special reference was made to women's role in food production and food security in developing countries. Other speakers referred to women's growing income-generating activities in both the public and private sectors, particularly in trade, services and industry, and to the efforts made by their States to support these activities with the provision of specialized adequate training and expansion of credit opportunities for women entrepreneurs and the research and development of appropriate technologies.

102. The delegations of several major donor countries stated that one of the major achievements of the Decade was the increase in multilateral and bilateral financial and technical support to programmes and projects for the advancement of women in developing countries. In particular, representatives placed emphasis on their countries' efforts to contribute towards a solution of the current social and economic crisis, particularly the food crisis in Africa by which women were especially affected.

A number of representatives mentioned as matters needing attention in a number of countries the disparity of earnings as between men and women, job segregation, dominance of women in the trade and services sectors and in other under-remunerated occupations, and the double burden borne by women workers who had family responsibilities.

Many delegations referred to the challenges and prospects opened up by rapid developments in the field of science and technology. Others stated, however, that these developments had not always benefited women and in some cases had even



worsened their situation by curtailing women's traditional economic activities and sources of income. Under-utilization of a country's human resources continued to be a serious obstacle to development. Many representatives stated that vocational training programmes should be introduced for women to enable them to become more qualified for more effective participation in the different sectors of the economy, other than the traditional types of work, and in the use of new and appropriate technology. In addition, it was stressed that formal employment opportunities for women were inadequate. Moreover, women's choice of occupational and educational fields was still influenced in many countries by traditions and customs.

105. Many delegations of developing countries referred to the effects of the recent world-wide economic recession on women in these countries. In addition to having to overcome protectionist barriers that restricted their exports to foreign markets, these countries had to bear an almost intolerable burden of external debt, the interest rates of which had increased, and were suffering from severe domestic inflation. As a consequence, Governments had had to introduce stringent austerity measures, including wage controls, which meant that households were caught between rising prices for consumer goods and declining earnings in real terms. The brunt of this situation was borne by women who had to stretch the family budget to the utmost. Many speakers attributed the imbalance of the world economy to the existing economic order and called for the early establishment of a new international economic order.

106. Some delegations suggested that the Conference's final proceedings should deal expressly with the way in which the international economic and social crisis, the effects of which hurt chiefly the developing countries, was affecting the situation of women. They suggested that the problems of the foreign debt, the imbalance of international trade and the decline in development finance should be stressed as obstacles that were hampering more seriously than in the past the achievement by women of the objectives of equality, development and peace and of the sub-themes: employment, education and health.

107. Many representatives stated that the increased participation of women in decision-making had contributed significantly to the achievements of the goals of the Decade: Equality, Development and Peace and of its sub-themes: employment, health and education. Greater participation by women in decision-making was promoted by the incorporation of specific women's components in national development plans, including the formulation of specific programmes of action for women, and by the establishment of women's national machineries.

108. A number of delegations said that the lack of an adequate data base and indicators for the measurement of women's economic contribution to the gross national product perpetuated their lack of "visibility" and exclusion from the management of national resources and technology.

#### Peace

109. Many delegations reaffirmed the close interrelationship of peace with the other two objectives of the Decade. Many delegations stated that peace was an essential prerequisite for true equality and sustained development. Several noted that peace had relevance to the sub-themes of the Decade - education, employment and health.

110. A large number of delegates stated that women all over the world accepted peace as an objective necessity and increasingly played a key role in the search

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for peace, security and social justice as individuals and as members of governmental and non-governmental organizations. Some delegations emphasized the role of women in preparing societies for life in peace. Women's involvement in peace efforts ranged from participation in peace movements to disarmament campaigns, opposition to military conflict as well as to debates on security and co-operation. Noting that war and the threat of war constituted a particularly serious danger for the daily life of women and children, many delegations emphasized the importance of further enhancing the integration of women in peace efforts at both national and international levels. Some delegations, in particular, stressed the unprecedented dangers of the arms race in outer space and the threat of nuclear war, and called for the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation. These delegations pointed out that the more women took an active stand for peace, the better chance there would be to attain lasting peace. In addition, many delegations stressed that the curbing of the arms race and disarmament could help release much needed resources for productive development efforts which would also benefit women. Other delegations emphasized the need to develop a climate of mutual trust which would allow balanced and verifiable measures of disarmament to be taken.

11. A few delegations stressed in that connection that respect for those human rights and fundamental freedoms which were listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was not only essential for any improvement in the legal, economic and social status of women, but also a most important factor in any democratic decision-making process, thereby constituting the most important requisite for a just and lasting peace.

12. In the opinion of certain delegations, one of the main obstacles to achieving peace was the course of imperialist forces leading to heightened international tensions resulting from the increase of hotbeds of tension in various parts of the world, which pushed humanity towards a dangerous limit. According to these delegations, the arms race - including the threat of a nuclear war - had reached an unprecedented scope on earth and risked spreading to outer space. They also felt that the implementation of the "Star Wars" programme would boost the threat of a truly global and all-destroying military conflict and would result in a new and still more dangerous round of the arms race.

13. Many delegations stated that women had always suffered particularly from troubles inflicted by war and preparations for war. In their view, women had to bear the heavy burden of the runaway arms race, which devoured colossal resources that could be used in the interest of humanity's peaceful development. They felt that these resources could be the economic basis for solving many problems essential to the position of women and their families, including such problems as the elimination of poverty and hunger, and combating disease and illiteracy.

Other delegations, however, stated that, although an increasing number of women in all countries kept the ideals of peace and disarmament alive, as mothers, educators and as members of peace movements, women had been largely unable in some countries to make any significant direct input into the peace process, being excluded from the decision-making processes at both the national and international levels.

The continued racist policy of apartheid in South Africa and in occupied Namibia was identified as a major obstacle to peace and the advancement of the status of women in that country. In this connection, several representatives

expressed support for the struggle of the African liberation movements (ANC, PAC and SWAPO) which, as vanguards of the South African and Namibian peoples, were resolutely fighting against racial oppression and for national liberation. They called for an end to the illegal occupation of Namibia, for the implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 435 (1978), and for an end to apartheid, and called on the international community to apply sanctions against South Africa.

116. Several delegations referred to the sufferings and maltreatment of the Palestinian women in the occupied Arab territories, of the Syrian women in the occupied Syrian Golan and of the Lebanese women in southern Lebanon. It was pointed out that women could not develop or participate effectively in society under foreign occupation and subjugation, specially while witnessing every day the arrest, the disappearance and dispersal of husbands, brothers and sons. Many representatives expressed support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people for their inalienable right to self-determination and to return to their homes and property without external interference, and to the establishment of their independent State in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and all relevant United Nations resolutions.

117. Some delegations pointed out that the Iran-Iraq war also hindered the progress and development of women in the area. They expressed concern about the hardships suffered by the women affected by the conflict. Some called for an end to the conflict and for the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council concerning the conflict.

118. Several representatives drew attention to the situation of women in Central America, especially where there was what they termed imperialist intervention in the internal affairs of countries in this subregion, and to the hardships imposed on women by the undeclared war in Nicaragua. The efforts of the Contadora Group to promote peace and development in the subregion of Central America were commended by a number of speakers.

119. Several representatives drew attention to the sufferings of women in some parts of Asia due to aggression and foreign occupation, and to the vast problem of refugees created thereby. In their opinion, this constituted a serious obstacle to the advancement of the women in the region and to peace and security in the area. The same representatives said that a political solution on the basis of withdrawal of foreign troops was necessary for the problems concerned.

#### Sub-themes of the Decade

##### Education

120. With respect to the sub-themes of the Decade, employment, health and education, many representatives reported important advances achieved in each of these areas in their countries. These included equal access to education at all levels, equal employment opportunities, and specific health provisions for mothers, children and families as a priority. In this connection, developed countries reported significant progress towards equal educational opportunities for women and men, and in particular in the scientific and technological fields. In developing countries, substantial progress was also reported, particularly at the elementary level and in literacy education. It was pointed out, however, that while the illiteracy rate varied greatly from country to country and improvements were noted, it was still a fact that in the world and particularly in developing countries, the

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female illiteracy rate was far higher than that of males. Many representatives referred to the illiteracy rate among women in developing countries, and others referred to inadequate functional literacy in certain developed countries.

121. Slow but positive movement was reported at other levels of education, with women increasingly participating in non-traditional vocational training and in adult education. Delegates reported on their countries' efforts to increase female enrolment ratios, to reduce drop-out rates among girls and to diversify curricula for women, and to provide opportunities and training for mature women.

#### Employment

122. It was stressed by numerous speakers that, despite legislative and other measures intended to ensure equality of the sexes in all respects, it was still true in many countries that as regards wages, appointment to posts of responsibility and education, women were still at a disadvantage compared to men. They pointed out that so long as the attendance of girls and young women at educational establishments and their subject orientation differed from those of boys and young men, the employment opportunities for the female labour force would remain less favourable than those for men; in addition, women's chances of rising to managerial or senior posts would continue to be limited and women's earnings would be lower than those of their male colleagues, even if they were doing comparable work.

123. Attention was drawn by many speakers to the increases which had occurred in recent years in the share of the labour force accounted for by women, not merely in traditionally feminine occupations but in a wide range of economic activities. Exceptions noted were certain arduous occupations or night work, sometimes prohibited for women or incompatible with the conventions of ILO. Several representatives stated that in their countries full employment had been achieved and equal opportunity policies had created situations in which women were found at all levels, including managerial and administrative posts, and in fields formerly considered non-traditional for women. Wage differences between men and women were noted by many countries, though the differences appeared to be shrinking. Other speakers stated that the principle of equal pay for equal work was now fully in force in their countries.

124. A number of speakers indicated that the greater participation of women in economic activities was attributable to the expansion of so-called service industries, mainly but not exclusively in the developed countries. The demand for women workers was seen both as an opportunity and a challenge: an opportunity for women workers to strengthen their position in the family and in society, and a challenge to educational and training institutions to ensure the supply of skilled female labour.

125. As evidence of the progressive emancipation of women as members of the labour force, several speakers cited the increasing numbers of women enrolling as members of trade unions and taking an active part in union affairs.

126. A number of representatives pointed out that, while it was true that women were entering the labour force in increasing numbers, it was equally true that women accounted for a larger share than men among the unemployed. The reason was that although women were increasingly entering new fields of employment often based on new technology, they still tended in their countries to be employed in traditionally feminine trades that were particularly vulnerable to the vagaries of

the economic environment. They added that in many sectors of industry, including in particular the service industries, women were recruited as temporary or part-time workers and enjoyed little or no security of tenure.

127. A number of representatives stated that in their countries motherhood was recognized as an important social function. The State and society regarded the care of mothers, children and families as one of their priority tasks. Special facilities and benefits were made available in many countries for working mothers, as was explained by the representatives of these countries. The benefits included pregnancy leave, leave of absence from work - in some cases for both father and mother - after a child was born, cash allowances for mothers of infants and other forms of assistance. The facilities included child care centres, crèches, nursery schools (often located in the immediate vicinity of the place of work), and rest rooms for nursing mothers. Several representatives referred to the generous periods of maternity leave granted in their countries to working mothers and to their right, guaranteed by law, to reinstatement in their jobs after the expiry of this leave.

128. Several delegations reported on legislative and administrative measures adopted in their countries in order to reform the system of taxation in such a way that women would, in effect, receive tax treatment on an equal footing with men in situations where this had not been the case in the past. The object of such measures was to ensure that women's tax position would not be prejudiced by marriage and to provide an incentive to women with family responsibilities to carry on a gainful occupation if they so wished. In many cases, they said the fiscal provisions were supplemented by allowances or benefits that were designed to enable working women with family responsibilities to defray their additional expenses.

#### Health

129. Significant progress was reported by many delegations in the improvement of the health status of women and in the provision of health care, services and facilities. In particular, the increased life expectancy of women in many countries and reduction in infant, child and maternal mortality were mentioned as important achievements of the Decade.

130. It was pointed out by many delegates that an essential pre-condition for the advancement of women was their capability to control their reproductive function. The expansion of family planning facilities and the acceptance of family planning practices, enabling women to control their fertility and to space children in accordance with their personal and family circumstances, were considered by many delegates as some of the main achievements of the Decade. However, other speakers reported that the control of fertility was made difficult by the revival of cultural values, norms and attitudes which regarded the number of children as proof of the man's virility and as a source of financial support in later years for their parents.

131. Many speakers noted that the world-wide emphasis on primary health care had placed new emphasis on the health of women, who as the most crucial providers of health care to children and families, must themselves be healthy to fulfil that role adequately. Women's roles as community health workers and traditional birth attendants were particularly noted, as was women's increasing participation in other health professions.

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132. Health conditions were reported to be still inadequate in many parts of the world, especially for women in rural areas. Women were more likely to be malnourished than men and had generally less access to medical facilities. In addition, birth rates were particularly high among illiterate and unemployed women, which indicated a clear interrelationship between improvements in education, health and employment and the role and status of women.

#### Other areas

133. With regard to information and knowledge about women's role in and contribution to society, significant progress was reported by many delegates. Through the gathering of gender-specific information, country surveys, and with the help of research institutions and by other means, greater knowledge had been accumulated during the Decade about women's role in society, their contribution to all economic activities and, in particular, to agricultural production, to industry and services in the formal and informal sectors, to the household and thus to society as a whole. While much still remained to be done, national and international statistical agencies had gone a long way towards measuring women's work in the sectors where estimates had often been deficient, particularly the informal sector and agriculture. In addition, the body of knowledge of women's economic roles and of the cultural attitudes that affected gender roles in society and in the family had grown rapidly during the Decade, thanks to the efforts of national research institutes and international organizations.

134. Many representatives stated that the Decade had contributed to raising public awareness of the difficulties encountered by women on their path to integration in development, and they emphasized their essential contribution to national economic development. The Decade had also contributed to a greater sense of awareness and self-confidence among women as individuals and as a group. It had, in essence, served the important task of preparing the ground work for the implementation of national programmes for the advancement of women. A number of speakers mentioned a definite change of attitude on the part of men towards the role of women in the home and at work. More and more men, particularly in developed countries, were assuming a share of household tasks and of the care of children. To some extent, these speakers said, this new attitude was attributed to the spread of knowledge about women's essential role in society, in the economy and in the family, which was itself a consequence of the publicity given during the Decade to the role of women in society.

135. At the regional level, environmental disasters and, in particular drought and the consequent famine in the African region were mentioned as obstacles which seriously hindered the achievement of the Decade's goals and objectives.

136. Many countries also noted the difficulties introduced by continued high levels of population growth as an obstacle to the advancement of the status of women. The consequent economic and social pressures on urban areas as a result of population growth and urbanization was also mentioned by many countries. Many representatives stressed the importance of implementing the Mexico City World Population Plan of Action 1984.

137. Many representatives drew attention to the problems of violence against women, sexual harassment, prostitution, violence in the family, abused and battered women. It was noted that violence in the home, whether based on traditional customs or spousal abuse, was all too prevalent in many countries. Family privacy,

guilt feelings or embarrassment had often covered up this widespread phenomenon. Some representatives pointed out that domestic violence had to be recognized as a criminal act against women and treated with appropriate legal measures, which could be complemented by effective social and support services to the victims.

138. Many representatives identified refugee women and children as subjects of particular concern. They pointed out that not only their numbers were growing steadily, but equally importantly, they suffered daily from deprivation, disorientation and anomie. Among the root causes listed by several government representatives of this acute problem were famine, drought and other environmental problems, extreme poverty and, especially, armed conflicts, foreign aggression and occupation and loss of human freedoms. Refugee women and children were most vulnerable. They suffered more than men from the consequences of lawlessness and dissolution of the social fabric. Life in refugee camps also often placed the responsibility for the care and education of children entirely on their mothers.

139. Several delegations addressed the problems experienced by migrant women and, in particular, those of the migrant women workers. Other delegations reported that new legislation had been enacted in their countries during the Decade to improve the living and working conditions of migrant women. They reported in addition that migrant women and, in particular, migrant women workers had been able to gain greater equality within the host societies during the Decade.

140. Some representatives referred to the situation of indigenous minorities in view of their low levels of living. The women of indigenous minorities had an important role in traditional societies as custodians of their culture, language, laws and lands. They were also often the mainstay of community-level organizations and in this way, women members of indigenous minorities increased thereby their participation in decision-making in society as a whole. Some representatives reported on the establishment of task forces to investigate the needs of indigenous women and advise on appropriate policies and programmes.

141. Many participants urged that special attention should be given to measures and projects for alleviating the hardships of rural women in developing countries. These women, particularly in least developed countries of Africa and Asia, laboured from before dawn till after dusk in working the land, fetching water, often from distant sites, gathering and carrying wood, preparing the meals for their families, taking produce to market - a seemingly endless round of toil. The speakers considered that the national authorities and donors of aid should make concerted efforts - in so far as they were not already doing so - to devise rural development projects that would take the situation of these women into account. Several representatives cited examples of schemes designed to achieve this purpose, and the representatives of some donor countries described results achieved by their aid agencies in this respect, to which voluntary agencies had in some cases made valuable contributions.

142. Several delegates were of the opinion that elderly women were in need of particular support and assistance, especially in view of the rapid increase in life expectancy for both men and women in developed and developing countries and of the higher survival rates of women in higher age brackets. The women whose husbands had died or retired often faced serious economic difficulties and had to be aided financially. However, even when they were economically self-sufficient, elderly women often confronted the danger of isolation and loneliness.

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Statements by representatives of organizations in the United Nations system

143. The Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development stated that the Department, as the main operational arm of the United Nations Secretariat, provided enormous potential for involving women in development activities, in such fields as natural resources, energy, integrated rural development, development planning, public administration and finance, statistics, population and social development. The Department generally did not encourage special women's projects per se; instead, components related to women were added to its projects. Its approach had been "Keep it simple", with heavy emphasis on the training of women. This approach had proved to be fruitful. Many examples were cited. More impressively, three of the eight projects which had received special mention at the Conference were being executed or assisted by the Department. As regards the future, she said that the Department would continue its integrated approach and work closely with other international agencies as well as non-governmental organizations. However, she cautioned that, unless the numbers of qualified women holding higher positions in Governments and international organizations increased greatly, there could be no real progress. She mentioned that the Department had increased its percentage of women professionals from 18 per cent in 1979 to 28 per cent in 1983 and still maintained the proportion at 25 per cent in 1985, exceeding the general average for United Nations Headquarters. However, despite many efforts the Department still could not increase the proportion of women among its field experts from a static 4 or 5 per cent. She appealed therefore for more applications by qualified female candidates to serve as the Department's field project experts. She also pleaded for the support of Governments in ensuring women's full participation in projects.

144. The Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific stated that the issues affecting women throughout the world - equality, development and peace - had been discussed in depth at the Regional Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting held in Tokyo in March 1984. This regional input to the Conference was marked by a consensus among Governments in the region that over the past decade the progress made by women in the economic, social and political fields had been uneven, both within and among countries of the ESCAP region. The setbacks, attributable to adverse global and regional economic conditions, had affected the poorest women most. The Tokyo meeting had therefore urged that efforts made during the past decade should be continued to the year 2000 and that highest priority should be given to the poorest. In addition, the meeting expressed the view that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was a crucial instrument and had urged all Governments in the region that had not already done so to ratify the Convention. Stronger and more co-ordinated efforts by Governments and women were needed for the purpose of bringing further structural changes that would ensure a better future for women and for the world.

The representative of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) stated that the adoption and application of concerted measures at the international level called for by UNCTAD to revitalize the world economy and to activate the development process in the third world would be bound to have a bearing on the lives of women, who constitute half the world's population. In addition to its overall work, UNCTAD undertook specific work related to women: a Joint Programme UNCTAD/INSTRAW on the impact of technological development on the advancement of women had produced two studies: "Women, Technology and Sexual Relations" and "Technology and Women's Status", which had been submitted to the Nairobi Conference. Other sectoral studies were being prepared on (a) the role of



women in the field of primary commodities, (b) structural change and adjustment in manufactures trade and female employment, and (c) the role of women in the economy of the least developed countries. In the context of activities contributing to the participation and advancement of women in all sectors of economic activities, UNCTAD had as yet made only a modest contribution, but it was committed to giving women's issues their rightful place in its programme, and was ready to co-operate with other bodies in order to enhance and improve the role played by women in trade sectors.

146. The representative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) stressed that, although statistical data were inadequate, it was clear that the contribution of women to the industrialization of their countries was vital to the overall economic and social development of the third world. Women were increasingly participating in and contributing towards industrial development, both in the small-scale and informal sector and in the modern industrial sector. On the one hand, scientific and technological advances in industrial production had increasingly led to the elimination of strenuous physical labour and widened the occupational opportunities for women; on the other hand, these advances were expected to make major changes in the future requirements of industry. Hence higher education and training opportunities for women in industrial production skills were of crucial importance for the purpose of offering to women greater access to skilled and professional positions and of ensuring their involvement in decisions concerning industrial planning as well as in decisions relating to science and technology.

147. The Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) said that women and children constituted the majority of the approximately one billion persons who were lacking adequate shelter and living in extremely unhealthy and unsanitary conditions in neglected rural areas and urban slums. Taken together the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (1987) and the Forward-looking Strategies both called for equal rights and opportunities with respect to access to credit and loans, to fundamental training and education, to ownership of land and security of tenure, as well as for full participation of the poor in shelter improvement programmes which would lead to increased employment opportunities for women and would contribute to national economic development. He appealed to the women of the world to mobilize, to support and to act in concert in order to achieve better shelter and facilities for the poor.

148. The Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) affirmed the Fund's commitment to strengthen and support actions that would yield direct social, health and economic benefits for women, recognizing that the improvement of women's condition was a prerequisite of children's well-being. Among the measures specified by the Executive Board of UNICEF were the support of economically viable income-generating projects; the intensification of the promotion of female education; and the programmes dealing with food scarcity at the household level. One recent development favourable to women had been the new potential for a revolution in child survival and growth through four low-cost primary health care opportunities: growth surveillance; oral rehydration; breast-feeding and appropriate local weaning foods; and universal immunization by 1990 against the six major childhood diseases. These child survival measures were being linked with programmes to enhance the situation of women in three ways: (a) strengthening the socio-economic capacity of women to better feed and care for their children; (b) promoting training of women in a variety of skills to become agents of change and active generators within their communities; and (c) supporting women's organizations at the grass-roots level. He said that the Conference was challenged

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to take one specific dramatic action to promote children's and women's well-being by asking that women should spearhead the movement to achieve the universal immunization of children and pregnant women by 1990, on a largely self-sustaining basis and in a way that would strengthen other child survival measures and primary health care in general. The challenge of the next few years should be the development of a new ethic that would demand action to correct adverse conditions affecting millions of women and children. Such action would in large part be accomplished by empowering women to improve dramatically their own condition, as well as that of their families and children.

149. The Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), speaking also in his capacity as Director of the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (UNOEOA), stated that the study entitled "Inter-organizational assessment of women's participation in development", which had been submitted to the Conference and had been co-ordinated by UNDP, was designed to identify programming modalities and methods that would be more effective in overcoming remaining obstacles to women's full participation in technical co-operation activities supported by the United Nations development system. The study, involving 14 different organizations and based on the active co-operation of four Governments, those of Rwanda, Democratic Yemen, Indonesia and Haiti, had already been accepted as a basis for continued inter-agency collaboration in a number of follow-up activities. He added that in his work as Director of the UNOEOA he was constantly reminded of the debt owed to the crucial life-sustaining activities of the African women, who historically had been and remained the continent's chief food producers. He was convinced that African women would play a major role in carrying Africa from crisis to rehabilitation, to economic recovery and onward to further economic and social progress through self-reliant development. Any other process would not only be morally indefensible but economically unsound. In concluding, he said that he was honoured that the General Assembly had decided to place the United Nations Development Fund for Women in autonomous association with UNDP, an arrangement that promised to strengthen further the existing operational and substantive ties. He noted that two recent initiatives of the Fund - the African Investment Plan and the Food Cycle Technologies Project - were of immediate interest to the emergency operations in Africa.

150. The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated that the Office provided international protection and material assistance to all refugees, including of course refugee women who often suffered great hardship. The report on "The activities and programmes of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on behalf of refugee women" (A/CONF.116/11) emphasized the international protection of refugee women as well as programmes of material assistance for them in the fields of health, education and employment, supported by counselling and social services. Protection was needed not only for refugee women whose physical safety was at risk, both during the flight and within the refugee camp. Unrestricted access by UNHCR to camps and border areas could deter such violations. UNHCR had established an Anti-Piracy Programme to reduce the number of attacks on the high seas, notably attacks on refugee boats. The health programmes of UNHCR included the provision of supplementary feeding, public health education, the training of refugee health workers, and mental health care. At the end of 1984, UNHCR had 103 education projects in 45 countries, providing both academic schooling and vocational training. During the decade, the Office had provided post-primary educational assistance to refugee women and girls, including Namibian refugee students. Refugee women in particular suffered from a lack of employment opportunities. UNHCR had therefore emphasized income-generating and self-sufficiency activities to enable them to reduce their

dependence on assistance and to resume a dignified and productive life. Exile might imply new and often difficult roles and responsibilities for the refugee woman, but it might also represent access to a new way of life. While respecting the socio-cultural background of the refugee woman, UNHCR tried to provide her with the means to confront her new life situation in a constructive and positive way.

151. The Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), referring to the achievements of the International Conference on Population held in Mexico City in 1984 and their relationship to the concerns of the Nairobi Conference, observed that women's concerns formed an important part of the Declaration of Mexico City and the recommendations of the 1984 Conference. That Conference had confirmed, first, that the improvement of the roles and status of women was an important goal in itself. Secondly, because women's status was clearly related to demographic variables such as fertility and maternal mortality, improving the status of women should be a component of all population policies. Thirdly, effective population policies helped to relieve women of their traditional burdens and offered them the means to contribute fully to and benefit from economic and social development. And fourthly, the achievement of the objectives of population programmes, particularly those related to family planning, depended to a great extent on the active participation of women in all aspects of those programmes. Accordingly, UNFPA would continue to ensure that women's concerns were taken into account in all aspects of population policies and programmes and that women were given the opportunity and the means to participate in and to benefit from all relevant activities supported by UNFPA.

152. The representative of the World Food Programme (WFP) stated that WFP, the food aid arm of the United Nations system, had been reaching large numbers of low-income rural women through projects for agriculture and rural development, for human resources development, and for emergency relief. At least one half of the \$925 million that WFP had committed to development projects in 1984 directly involved and benefited the poorest strata of rural women. At least two thirds of the recipients of WFP assistance in emergency operations - of which \$234 million had been committed in 1984 - were women and children. As a resource for development assistance, food had a unique role in improving the economic, nutritional and health levels of low-income women. Among the poor, women were the main food providers and assumed responsibility for food distribution within their households. Thus, WFP's food aid basket, unlike other forms of household income, tended to remain under women's direct control, and could provide women with more income. WFP's food aid also released women's time from arduous subsistence chores since a substantial number of WFP-assisted projects developed village fuelwood lots, food storage facilities, potable water supplies and irrigation networks as well as other rural infrastructural supports to promote food security. Food aid also acted as an incentive for development through projects for better nutrition. In supplementary feeding projects for the "at risk" groups of women, the distribution of WFP food aid commodities through village-level Mother and Child Health (MCH) centres helped rural women to gain access to basic health care, income-generating skills, and education for themselves and their children. WFP's food aid, provided free of charge to Governments, could substitute for certain government expenditures (e.g., the wage bill in food-for-work projects or the food bill in school feeding programmes). Part of these budgetary savings, especially a period of fiscal austerity could be programmed to support women's access to productive resources. These were only some of the ways in which food aid helped women. Others included monetization, for example through co-operatives or in development schemes. There was, in sum, a "tight fit" between the nature of project food aid and the immediate needs of women in poverty, for food aid

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contributed to sustainable development, particularly the promotion of food security, the expansion of female employment, and the improvement of women's productive capacity and access to resources.

153. The representative of the International Labour Office stated that the ILO had promoted the goals of the Decade through its standard-setting and technical co-operation activities, with a view to improving conditions of work, reducing inequalities, fostering socio-economic development, and promoting peace through social justice. The well-being of women workers was one of the traditional concerns of the ILO. Certain conventions for the protection of working women's health dated back to 1919, and Convention No. 100 concerning equal pay for work of equal value had been adopted by the International Labour Conference as early as 1951. Yet, never in the history of the ILO had women represented such a formidable challenge to the world of labour as now. The quantitative and qualitative changes in women's labour force participation called for major adjustments. Within the formal labour force the number of women had increased dramatically to reach 35 per cent of the total. At present, there were close to 700 million "economically active" women and the number was expected to increase to nearly 900 million by the year 2000. Although most working women were still confined to low-skill, low-pay, low-status jobs, the persistent move of women into all spheres of economic production and into all jobs at all levels was irreversible. This development was not simply a reflection of the growth of the gross national product but was an interrelated process of economic growth, self-reliance and social justice. The example of working women indicated that without self-reliance and social justice economic growth was retarded and development remained lopsided. The massive entry of women into the labour force as a consequence of new needs and new aspirations had made it clear that, in most cases, women's income was essential for family well-being. It was estimated that one third of the world's families depended on the sole income of women. The present high unemployment and underemployment rates of women were unacceptable. Concerted national and international action was required, including constitutional guarantees and the translation of relevant legislation into practice, in order to achieve full productive and freely-chosen employment for all. Real equality of opportunity in employment would not be brought about as long as the labour market remained largely segregated one. Firm measures were called for to desegregate vocational training with a view to providing all women and men with marketable skills and access to all occupations. Making equal provisions for men and women would not necessarily lead to real equality of opportunity. Special measures were therefore needed at the national and international levels that would enable women to profit equally from training and employment opportunities, particularly disabled, refugee, migrant, older and young working women and those suffering under apartheid. At its twenty-first session the International Labour Conference had unanimously adopted a resolution on equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women in employment. The ILO firmly believed that policies to improve the status of women workers throughout the world were in essence no more and no less than efforts to make a vital contribution to a better and brighter future for the whole of humanity.

154. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) stated that support for and consultation with women farmers had not been commensurate with their considerable efforts and responsibilities in agriculture. Increased access to land, credit, markets, technology and extension services would be particularly important, and men as well as women should be trained to work with groups of rural women, as a matter of priority, in cases where women constituted the majority of small farmers. The introduction of new crops or the reallocation of land as between food and cash crops should not diminish women's

access to land or income for food consumption. Credit should be based on performance in cases where women lacked title deeds to the land they cultivated. FAO's policies, programmes and projects were increasingly following these strategies as part of an effort to improve national and household food security. A film "The Forgotten Farmers: Women and Food Security" would be made available to member countries in order to stimulate discussion and action at the national level.

155. The representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stated that in the organization's experience the United Nations Decade for Women represented just a beginning of a decisive transformation of the relationships between women and men. The forces creating and upholding discrimination against women were complex, and UNESCO has expanded its activities in the area of research and studies relating to women in recent years. The literacy gap between the sexes had not been closed, and efforts were needed to ensure for women at least a basic education. Increased attention had been given in UNESCO's programmes to measures for counteracting the sex stereotypes transmitted through schools and the media. Girls and women should be encouraged to participate in scientific and technological pursuits and in decision-making in social, cultural, economic and political life.

156. In his address to the Conference, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) distinguished between two possible scenarios for the future of health and society. The male one was the hyper-expansionist ("HE") scenario, standing for unconstrained technological development. Development in terms of the "HE" scenario had by no means been always beneficial for women, least of all in developing countries. The female scenario was the sane, humane, ecological ("SHE") one, standing for the caring, nurturing role in societies. He noted that the objective of "Health for all by the year 2000" belonged squarely to the "SHE" scenario. He cautioned, however, that women must be considered for their own worth, as equal members of society, rather than only as mothers, potential mothers or careers. He pointed out that, after all, the numbers of families headed by women were on the steady increase, but that these women had no real economic options for self-support and development. He stressed that women should be regarded not merely in the light of their contributions to family life, but should be considered in terms of their rights to share responsibilities for others with the men in their lives and with the men in their societies.

157. The representative of the World Bank stated that, being a development institution, the Bank had come to recognize that women's participation was essential to the success of many development programmes and projects, and that appropriate measures and instruments needed to be devised in order to integrate women in the earliest stages of planning. Better information was needed in order to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of women in national development, and more specific items concerning women were being included in the Bank's data bases. The Bank had learned a great deal from experience and from reviews of completed projects. For instance, in view of women's increasingly important but inadequately recognized role in agriculture, the Bank was enhancing the access of women farmers to agricultural extension services, and inputs with a view to improving their productivity, and the strategy for sub-Saharan Africa should make more explicit the support for this role. Because its research confirmed how important was women's education to the welfare of society and future generations, the Bank was endeavouring to increase the access for females to education and training and to reduce high illiteracy rates. Data on population and development gathered for the World Development Report 1984 showed that the situation of women was a critical variable in population growth. The Bank would fund additional

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research into population questions and increase lending for purposes connected with the health of the population. It was for Governments to take the decisions concerning the legislation, policies and programmes for improving opportunities for women. In its role as catalyst in the dialogue on economic policy and in the co-ordination of capital and technical assistance, the Bank was helping to create a more favourable climate for improving the options open to women. It advocated greater participation of women and their organizations in dialogues with development agencies concerning policies that would maximize the contribution of women to development and their share of the benefits.

158. The representative of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) stated that the Fund had been established in 1977 to deal exclusively with the problems of poor small farmers and the landless. It believed that there was a huge untapped potential for greater small-farm agricultural production among female as well as male farmers. Having invested some \$2 billion in 160 projects in 1984, the Fund had shown that there were effective ways of organizing development programmes around the needs of the rural poor. The battle against poverty and hunger could not be won unless women were active participants. IFAD had sought the integration and full participation of women in development programmes, particularly through the creation of, and support for, grass-roots organizations. On the basis of the experience gained, the Fund would submit specific policy recommendations to its executive board later in 1985 on the role of women in sustainable agriculture.

159. The Director of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) stated that the Institute constituted an important result of the Decade. Research, training, and information activities would have an important role in the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, as adopted by the Conference. The Institute's aim was to see that women were considered active contributors rather than passive elements in development in the context of social welfare problems. The Institute explored the planning and programming strategies and institutional frameworks needed for the integration of women's issues in national programmes and in economic and technical co-operation activities. It also tried to promote the development of more precise indicators, statistics and data on women to shed light on their role in informal or hidden sectors of national economies; to develop appropriate grass-roots methods for training women; to explore the impact of new technologies on women; and to advise decision-makers on those issues. She mentioned that INSTRAW had been playing and would continue to play the role of a catalyst for developmental change, basing its operations on a network of co-operative management with organizations from the United Nations system, as well as academic, non-governmental and women's organizations at the international, regional and national levels.

The representative of the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT summarized activities of the Centre that had a bearing on the advancement of women and their integration in development. In the Centre's experience, women could play a very important role in the trade-promotion efforts of developing countries. Activities such as trade information and documentation and export market research were carried out by staff that included a number of women. In Africa, the Centre had been pursuing its activities in favour of African women in development, taking into account Chapter XII, on women and development, of the Lagos Plan of Action, and one of the priority areas recognized by the Centre's Advisory Group was development of skills among women entrepreneurs and their integration into economic activity. In 1984 a workshop on "Export Marketing for Women Entrepreneurs and Senior Women Managers of Business Enterprises in Eastern and Southern African Countries" had been held jointly with the Eastern and Southern African Management

Institute, and in 1985 a similar workshop for francophone West African countries would be held in co-operation with the West African Economic Community. The objective of these regional and future national workshops was to enhance the role of women in the export sector of African countries. The workshops fostered understanding of the techniques of the export business; they covered aspects of intra-African trade and the complex operations of exporting to traditional and new markets. In Asia and the Pacific, various activities of concern to women and contributing to their economic and social advancement were included in national and regional projects of the Centre. In some of the Centre's projects in Latin America and the Caribbean women participated, particularly in the areas of trade information and training.

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